



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Funding Highlights:

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to providing military veterans and their survivors with the benefits, care, and support they have earned through sacrifice and service to the Nation.
- The 2021 Budget continues to fulfill the President's promise to veterans by making critical investments in high priority initiatives that ensure veterans receive top quality care, benefits, and services—wherever they work or live. The Budget supports key Administration priorities such as veteran suicide prevention and opioid abuse prevention programs, and continues to integrate the changes enshrined in the VA MISSION Act of 2018, providing veterans greater choice in and access to the medical care they deserve. The Budget also supports other critical priorities, such as electronic health record modernization and information technology (IT) enhancements, to strengthen efficiency, transparency, and accountability within the Department.
- The 2021 Budget eliminates waste and enhances efficiency by accelerating the planned deployment for a modern medical care scheduling system. VA tested a modern scheduling system in Columbus, Ohio, which demonstrated: a more than 50 percent productivity improvement in scheduling staff; a 38-percent reduction in case manager overtime, resulting in a potential savings of \$9.9 million per year for VA when fully deployed; an expansion of same day appointment availability; and an increase in new and established patient appointments by five and six percent, respectively. VA will expand these benefits to more veterans in multiple medical centers in 2021 and to all veterans nationwide by 2025.
- The Budget requests \$105.0 billion for VA, a \$12.9 billion, or 14.0-percent increase from the 2020 enacted level, including changes in mandatory programs. In addition, the Budget requests \$94.2 billion in advance appropriations for VA medical care programs in 2022 to ensure the Department has sufficient resources to continue providing the quality medical services veterans have earned.

### The President's 2021 Budget:

VA's mission is to deliver benefits, care, and support to America's military veterans and their families; the Department also continues to implement reforms to improve care and benefits. The Budget provides the necessary resources to meet the Nation's commitment to veterans to help them recover from illnesses, injuries, or wounds sustained due to their military service and to enable their successful reintegration into civilian life.

**President Trump Is Committed to  
Supporting Every Brave American Who  
Has Served Our Nation**

*"We must strive to build communities that truly serve, support, and protect our veterans from the very first moment they return to civilian life."*

President Donald J. Trump  
August 21, 2019

The Budget fully funds the operation of veterans healthcare, one of the largest integrated healthcare systems in the United States with over 9.2 million enrolled veterans, provides disability compensation benefits to nearly 5.7 million veterans and their survivors, and administers pension benefits for approximately 393,000 veterans and their survivors.

In addition, the Budget invests in a broad range of veteran services and programs, including: educational assistance for nearly one million students; rehabilitation and employment benefits for approximately 131,000 veterans; servicemember and veteran group life insurance plans for approximately six million enrollees; more than three million active home mortgage loans; and me-

morial and burial benefits in more than 156 national cemeteries and thousands of other cemeteries across the Nation.

### ***Champions VA Programmatic Initiatives***

**Prioritizes Veterans Affairs Medical Care Funding.** The Budget provides \$90.0 billion, a 12.7-percent increase above the 2020 enacted level, including funding to continue the integration of the expanded VA MISSION Act of 2018 requirements, providing greater choice for many veterans regarding their healthcare decisions. The Budget also includes \$1.2 billion for the expansion of the Caregivers program, which provides stipend payments to eligible veterans.

**Invests in Veteran Suicide Prevention.** The Budget also provides \$313 million, a 32-percent increase over the 2020 enacted level, to support the Administration's veteran suicide prevention initiatives, including the National Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End Suicide, a population-based, public health model encouraging partnerships at the national, regional, and local levels. These efforts support evidence-based approaches for suicide prevention that intersect with various sectors, including State and local governments, faith communities, employers, schools, and healthcare organizations.

**Funds Opioid Abuse Prevention Programs.** The Budget provides \$504 million for opioid prevention and treatment, a 19-percent increase over the 2020 enacted level. This amount includes \$121 million for comprehensive programs for addiction treatment and recovery that expand and integrate implementation of evidence-based programs related to opioid and pain care for veterans. Funding supports expansion of multidisciplinary efforts, including: providing naloxone kits to at-risk VA patients and VA first responders; addressing staffing and resource deficiencies at pain management teams and pain clinics; expanding VA's use of predictive analytics to target veterans at-risk for overdose events; supporting recommendations from the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis; and establishing a "tele-hub" to provide opioid pain, addiction prevention, and treatment using telehealth capabilities.

**Provides Funding for VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization.** The Budget also provides \$2.6 billion, an 82-percent increase over the 2020 enacted level, to support a unified electronic health record (EHR) between the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA. The funding enables VA to double the number of sites that transition to the new EHR in 2021, consistent with DOD, and accelerates a new scheduling system throughout the VA enterprise five years sooner than originally planned. This planned acceleration would enable VA to increase provider productivity and veteran access to care.

**Modernizes VA IT and Infrastructure.** The Budget provides \$4.9 billion, a 12.4-percent increase over the 2020 enacted level, to fund critical investments in IT modernization, infrastructure, and customer service to enhance the veteran experience. Specifically, this funding enables the Department to enhance mission critical IT systems supporting VA MISSION Act of 2018 implementation, facilitating Blue Water Navy claims processing, enhancing supply chain management, and implementing financial management business transformation.

**Blue Water Navy Claims Processing.** The Budget also provides \$137 million for VA to support Blue Water Navy claims processing, enabling the hire of new claims processors to augment staffing capacity and complete scanning requirements not finished during 2020.

**Increases Access to Burial and Memorial Benefits.** The Budget includes \$360 million, a 9.4-percent increase over the 2020 enacted level, to expand veteran access to memorial benefits, deliver premier services to veterans' families, and provide perpetual care for more than four million gravesites. The Budget also supports expanding and sustaining 156 cemeteries, which include 11 cemeteries transferred from the Department of the Army as part of the *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* plan, and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites.

### ***Promotes Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability***

**Targets Investments to Create Efficiencies.** The Budget prioritizes investments in areas that create future savings and that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of VA programs. Targeted investments in IT systems, including more than \$310 million for cloud migration and aging infrastructure replacement to support the new EHR system, would result in cost savings as VA consolidates data centers and reallocates resources to higher priority needs. VA is also committed to modernizing its disability compensation program and identifying innovative pilot programs aimed at providing opportunities for disabled veterans seeking employment.

**Streamlines Government.** The Budget also promotes fiscal discipline by better aligning a unified EHR between DOD and VA. This would give doctors instant and seamless access to veterans' full-service health records and history and enable faster, smarter connections between military and veteran health information. VA will also continue to change the way it buys medicine and equipment by tapping into DOD's centralized acquisition system.

**Reduces Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.** The Budget fully funds the Offices of Enterprise Integration and Accountability and Whistleblower Protection to ensure VA programs improve oversight, accountability, and performance within the Department. The Budget also provides \$228 million, an \$18 million increase above the 2020 enacted level, for the Office of the Inspector General to strengthen accountability, promote transparency, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

**President Trump Is Working Tirelessly  
to Provide the Benefits and Services that  
Our Brave Veterans Deserve**

*"My administration is committed to taking care of every warrior that returns home as a veteran."*

President Donald J. Trump  
August 21, 2019